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Social and human rights questions: advancement of women

Report of the Executive Board of the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women on the work of its fifth session

Summary

The Executive Board of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) held its fifth session on 21 February and 22 May 2008. The Executive Board considered: (a) the implementation of the programme of work during the period October 2007-April 2008; (b) the implementation of the INSTRAW Networking Strategy for the period October 2007-February 2008; (c) activities undertaken in the implementation of the Institute's Action Plan — Fund-raising Strategy, Advocacy and Image Enhancement 2008-2009 during the period February-April 2008; (d) the staffing situation of the Institute; (e) the proposed workplan and operational budget for 2009; and (f) the directorship of the Institute.

Decisions

At its fifth session, the Executive Board adopted a decision that requested the Secretary-General to (a) continue to provide appropriate administrative assistance and support to the Institute through several measures; (b) ensure continuity in the directorship of the Institute; and (c) seek the possibility of upgrading the position of Social Affairs Officer. The decision also requested the Director to intensify coordination with stakeholders and continue with fund-raising efforts.

The Executive Office also:

(a) Instructed the Institute to pursue the implementation of its work programme in keeping with the Institute's Strategic Framework for the period 2008-2011;

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(b) Took note of the Institute's Networking Strategy for 2008-2009;

(c) Took note with appreciation of the work undertaken by the Institute in the implementation of its programme of work during the period October 2007-April 2008;

(d) Took note of the progress made in the implementation of the Action Plan, encouraged the Institute to continue in its implementation and requested that Management Support Services continue to be available to the Institute during the process of implementing the Action Plan;

(e) Approved the workplan and operational budget for 2009 on the understanding that sufficient funds will be available to finance the activities;

(f) Compiled a shortlist of candidates for the post of Director to be submitted to the Secretary-General as stipulated in the statute of the Institute.

I. Organization of the session

1. The fifth session of the Executive Board of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) was attended by the following members of the Executive Board: Belarus, Egypt, Grenada, Honduras, Israel, the Philippines, Slovakia, Spain, the Syrian Arab Republic and Zimbabwe. The list of participants is included in the annex to the present report.

2. The Executive Board decided to postpone the election of new officers until its sixth session.

3. The President of the fifth session welcomed the Board members and expressed appreciation for their work and support to INSTRAW. She also expressed appreciation to the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, the Chief of Management Support Services, and the representatives from the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat for their continuing support of the Institute.

II. Decisions

4. At its fifth session, on 21 February 2008, the Executive Board adopted the text of the following decision:

The Executive Board of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women,

Expressing satisfaction with the substantive work of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, in particular the quality of its research and training programmes, as well as the progress it has made in the area of resource mobilization, which has enabled the Institute to repay the subventions received in 2007 and increase the level of voluntary funding from various donors,

Emphasizing the critical importance of achieving tangible research and training outputs in the course of implementing the strategic plan for 2008-2011, as well as ensuring the most efficient use of the Institute's resources by focusing them on upgrading and improving the quality and dissemination of research and training products, while exercising vigilance in the management of expenditures,

Taking note of the Action Plan arising from the consultancy service conducted by Management Support Services from 21 to 28 January 2008,

Recognizing the need to ensure an effective staffing structure within the secretariat of the Institute,

1. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to provide appropriate administrative assistance and support to the Institute, including by:

(a) Enhancing coordination among the Institute, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Department of Management of the Secretariat, in order to ensure that the objectives of the strategic plan, including resource mobilization efforts, are effectively and efficiently carried out;

(b) Designating a Liaison Officer within the United Nations Secretariat in New York, assigned with facilitating coordination between the secretariat of the Institute in Santo Domingo and United Nations Headquarters, including the

Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Office of Human Resources Management and the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts;

(c) Ensuring continuity in the directorship of the Institute, and in that regard, also requests the Secretary-General to announce the availability of the position of Executive Director starting July 2008 and to circulate, as soon as possible, the necessary information to enable the identification of suitable candidates, bearing in mind the importance of balance in geographic representation as well as gender equality;

2. *Requests* the Executive Director to intensify coordination with governmental gender machineries in the different regions, as well as to continue collaboration within the United Nations system and with international organizations, development agencies, civil society actors, such as non-governmental organizations and academia, as well as with the private sector;

3. *Requests* the Secretary-General to seek the possibility of upgrading the position of Social Affairs Officer from P-3 to P-4, as recommended in the report by the Director of the Institute on the staffing situation.

III. Deliberations of the Executive Board

A. Implementation of the programme of work and networking strategy

5. Following the presentation of the Director of the Institute, the Executive Board took note with appreciation of the reports on the implementation of the programme of work.

6. The Executive Board also took note of the progress made in the implementation of the networking strategy and expressed satisfaction with the results.

7. The Executive Board congratulated INSTRAW for the work accomplished thus far and instructed the Institute to continue with its activities in line with the strategic framework for the period 2008-2011.

8. The Executive Board recommended that the Institute actively continue with its fund-raising activities and undertake capacity-building activities not only in Latin America, but also in Africa and other regions.

9. The Executive Board also recommended that the Institute expand its partnerships and networking activities.

B. Management Support Services consultancy and implementation of the Action Plan

10. At its fifth session held on 21 February, the Executive Board reviewed the results of the Management Support Services consultancy and approved the resulting Action Plan — Fund-raising Strategy, Advocacy and Image Enhancement 2008-2009.

11. After considering the implementation of the programme of work and in reference to the evaluation of the Institute's work conducted by Management Support Services, the Executive Board made the following recommendations:

(a) To pursue fund-raising activities in order to provide the Institute with the resources required for implementing the strategic framework for the period 2008-2011;

(b) To pursue efforts to achieve recognition as a research and training institution and to expand the Institute's outreach to other gender mechanisms at the regional and international levels, and expand collaboration with other United Nations entities, international organizations and development agencies;

(c) To proceed with implementation of the Institute's new accounting and financial system as recommended by Management Support Services and proceed to purchase the software needed for the required upgrade;

(d) To strengthen relationships with current partners, proceed with the establishment of networking activities and strategic partnerships with organizations of the United Nations system, national machineries, civil society and academia in order to promote the Institute's activities in all regions of the world and implement the strategic framework for the period 2008-2011.

12. At its resumed fifth session, held on 22 May 2008, the Executive Board took note of the progress achieved on the implementation of the Action Plan, recommended that the Institute continue with its activities and requested that Management Support Services continue to be available to support the Institute throughout the process of implementation. The Board also requested that the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Office of Human Resources Management provide support to the actions taken in implementation of the Action Plan.

C. Staffing situation

13. The Executive Board analysed the report on the staffing situation and recommended that the Secretary-General seek the possibility of upgrading the post of Social Affairs Officer from the P-3 level to the P-4 level.

D. Workplan and operational budget for 2009

14. The Executive Board reviewed the workplan and operational budget and approved it on the understanding that sufficient funds will be available to finance the activities. The Board encouraged the Institute to continue with the austerity measures implemented thus far and to increase its fund-raising activities.

E. Directorship of the Institute

15. The Executive Board expressed its concern with continuity in the post of Director and requested the Secretary-General to take actions towards ensuring continuity.

16. The Members of the Executive Board analysed the numerous applications received following the circulation of the vacancy notice and after a careful review, the Board compiled a shortlist of six candidates to be submitted to the Secretary-General in accordance with the statute of the Institute and with a request that he give priority to the designation of the Director in order to ensure continuity in the directorship of the Institute given the small number of staff. The Board agreed that, pending the appointment of the Director or other appropriate transition arrangements, the next officer in the staff structure of the Institute would function as officer-in-charge.

17. In her farewell address to the Executive Board, the Director expressed her deep appreciation for the support received from the Executive Board and for the support of Member States, in particular the Group of 77 and China, and the donor countries that have supported the Institute during its revitalization process.

18. The Director presented a summary of the Institute's achievements during the past four years, as follows:

(a) Research and training projects in 35 countries throughout the world;

(b) Some 2.5 million hits per month to the Institute's website and 50,000 downloads per month;

(c) Forty-nine collaboration agreements signed with United Nations system, academic, civil society and other partners;

(d) Ten research studies produced on various topics;

(e) Five capacity-building tools developed.

19. Providing more specific information on specific activities undertaken in relation to the three pillars of the United Nations, the Director provided the following information:

Development

- Six research and capacity-building projects in 18 countries
- Five case studies carried out in 3 regions of the world

Peace and security

- Four research and advocacy projects in 4 countries
- Twelve capacity-building tools on security sector reform from a gender perspective
- One guide to support the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000)

Human rights

- Two research, training and knowledge management projects in 13 countries
- Eight conceptual documents on governance from a gender perspective and women's political participation at the local level

- Three capacity-building tools on governance from a gender perspective and women's political participation at the local level
- Two comprehensive analyses of governance from a gender perspective and women's political participation at the local level in Central America and the Andean region

20. The Director also made mention of the improvements and renovations which the premises of INSTRAW headquarters in Santo Domingo had undergone over the past four years.

21. The Executive Board expressed its great appreciation to the Director for her success in the strengthening and revitalization of the Institute during the past four years, and presented her with a commemorative plaque.

IV. Closure

22. The Executive Board decided to leave open the possibility of convening a resumed session at such time as the new Director takes office. The Executive Board also decided that the dates of the resumed session and of its sixth session would be determined upon consultations among the Members.

Annex

List of participants

Fifth session, 21 February 2008

Members of the Executive Board of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women

Country	*Representative*
Belarus	Alexander Strigelsky, Second Secretary
Egypt	Soha Gendi, Counsellor
Grenada	Marguerite St John, Counsellor
Honduras	Marcos Suazo, Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative
Israel	Mazal Renford, Director, Golda Meir Mount Carmel International Training Center
	Meirav Eilon Shahar, Counsellor
Philippines	Marie Yvette Banzon, Second Secretary
Slovak Republic	Viera Hanuláková, Director of the Department of Gender Policy, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family
	Peter Harmanovsky, Third Secretary
Spain	Nuria González-Barros, First Secretary
Syrian Arab Republic	Warif Halabi, Second Secretary
Zimbabwe	Sophia Nyamudeza, Minister Counsellor and Deputy Permanent Representative

Ex-officio members

Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs	Represented by Rachel Mayanja, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women
Host Country — Dominican Republic	Mariela Sánchez, Minister Counsellor
United Nations Regional Commissions	Daniela Simioni
INSTRAW Director	Carmen Moreno

Others: Paulette Woolf, Chief, Management Support Services, Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Management; Catherine Peluso, Executive Officer, Department of Economic and Social Affairs; Beverly Thompson, Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts.

Resumed fifth session, 22 May 2008

Members of the Executive Board of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women

Country	*Representative*
Belarus	Alexander Strigelsky, Second Secretary
Egypt	Soha Gendi, Counsellor
Grenada	Marguerite St John, Counsellor
Honduras	Marcos Suazo, Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative
	Sofía Cerna, First Secretary
Israel	Meirav Eilon Shahar, Counsellor
Philippines	Marie Yvette Banzon, Second Secretary
Slovak Republic	Viera Hanuláková, Director of the Department of Gender Policy, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family
	Peter Harmanovsky, Third Secretary
Spain	Nuria González-Barros, First Secretary
Syrian Arab Republic	Warif Halabi, Second Secretary
Zimbabwe	Sophia Nyamudeza, Minister Counsellor and Deputy Permanent Representative

Ex-officio members

Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs	Represented by Rachel Mayanja, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women
Host Country — Dominican Republic	Olivio Fermín, Minister Counsellor
Regional Commissions	Daniela Simioni
INSTRAW Director	Carmen Moreno

Others: Paulette Woolf, Chief, Management Support Services, Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Management; Catherine Peluso, Executive Officer, Department of Economic and Social Affairs; Beverly Thompson, Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts.